



Writing an Effective Introduction

Introductions and conclusions are spaces for you to relay the paper's central claim and purpose to your audience. You want to offer the larger meaning of your argument. Think: why does what I'm talking about really matter?

An effective Introduction (depending on the genre of the paper):

- Establishes the topic or the primary texts to be analyzed
- Provides necessary context or background on the topic
- Reveals research methodology (if applicable)
- Offers the thesis or main argument

You may start by:

- Challenging a commonly held view or a view from one of your sources
- Opening with a definition and then complicating or challenging it (do not start with "The dictionary defines X as...")
- Offering a hypothesis
- Using a brief story to illustrate a central issue of the topic

Let's say the goal of your paper is to argue that every U.S. citizen should own an iPad. In the Introduction, you will need to offer a thesis as to *why* everyone should have an iPad. To develop the Introduction...

You might begin with a general (and brief) discussion of how some scholars lament millennials' over-reliance on technology such as iPads, and then explain how it is actually a positive thing (**challenge common view**).

You might define and explain what an iPad is and then point out that it is actually so much more than that (**define then complicate**).

You might begin with an intriguing statement about how if everyone had an iPad, the world would be a better place (**offer a hypothesis**).

You might tell the audience about a situation in which an iPad saved someone's life (**brief story to illustrate central issue of topic**).